

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

WHAT HAPPENED? There was an unauthorized exposure of the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship database maintained by the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education (SCCHE) .

WHAT INFORMATION WAS INVOLVED? This database contained some personal identifying information - including names, home addresses, and social security numbers (which are labeled in the database as student identification numbers) of approximately 3,200 South Carolina high school students. The Palmetto Fellows scholarship database that was exposed is intended to be accessible on SCCHE's website only by authorized users at South Carolina institutions of higher education. The security incident resulted when this database became viewable without the required credentials. At this time, the forensic investigation reveals that the database was viewable without authorized credentials from May 26, 2017, until the discovery of the security incident.

WHAT IS SCCHE DOING ABOUT THIS EXPOSURE? SCCHE acted as soon as the exposure was discovered last week and stopped it immediately. The agency also brought in forensic investigators to determine the exact cause and nature of the incident. The agency continues to work with state and private information technology security experts, including the State Law Enforcement Division (SLED), to ensure that scholarship information is not subject to any further unauthorized exposure.

WHAT DO INVESTIGATORS KNOW ABOUT THE EXPOSURE? To be clear, investigators have found no evidence that malicious intent was involved with exposure of the database or that the exposed data has been used for identity theft or any other crime.

WHAT CAN PEOPLE WHO ARE AFFECTED BY THE EXPOSURE DO TO PROTECT THEMSELVES? Contact the S.C. Department of Consumer Affairs at [1-800-922-1594](tel:1-800-922-1594) or visit <http://www.consumer.sc.gov/IdentityTheft> for guidance on protecting yourself from identity theft and dealing with any inappropriate use of your data. Anyone with questions with regard to this notification, please contact SCCHE at [803-737-2260](tel:803-737-2260) or visit <http://www.che.sc.gov>.

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION: While there is no evidence at this time to suggest that any information has been, or will be, used in any malicious way, we wanted to notify you of this incident out of an abundance of caution and in accordance with our commitment to transparency. We have also notified law enforcement, the S.C. Department of Consumer Affairs and the national credit rating agencies of the incident.